

# Newsroom

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# Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art Welcomes Visiting Artist Medha Bhatt

OCTOBER 24, 2016



Textile artist and naturalist, Medha Bhatt, will visit Georgia Southern from Oct. 24-25. She will conduct a workshop Oct. 24 from 2:30 to 5 p.m. in the Visual Arts Building (VA), room 2046, and deliver a lecture about her work on Oct. 25 from 5 to 6 p.m. in VA, room 2071. Bhatt's work will be on display in Gallery 303.

Bhatt has worked with environmental organizations in developing solutions toward zero waste, and has worked to empower women through training programs in reusing of discards. Her own label, First Forest, considers discarded materials as a resources for creating innovative and aesthetically rich handmade products.

"With the current issues of climate change confronting every part of our planet, she believes sharing efforts made by individuals can strengthen the campaign of conserving resources and biodiversity," said graphic design professor Santanu Majumdar, MFA. "Medha will be sharing her journey and experiences of working in the area of sustainability and innovation, and have interactive and insightful discussions with the students as well as faculty and staff. This exchange of ideas holds great significance in developing a road-map for a greener tomorrow."

Bhatt's workshop will focus on her recent project, "Birds, Art and Reuse of Discards" and will be accompanied with a small exhibit called "Songbirds of Blue Ridge Mountains." The work celebrates 100 years of the U.S. National Park Service and features textile artworks illustrating birds like the Mockingbird, the Northern Cardinal, the Blue Jay and many more. The exhibit will act as a backdrop to the workshop and artist talk, which will include textile art and mixed media as techniques of exploration. Bhatt's Artist Talk will focus on bridging the gap between pollution, biodiversity and conservation through art and design and how First Forest was developed.

"The focus of sustainability probably runs in my veins as my mother has been an energetic upcyclist all her life," said Bhatt. "Further, during my design education years, I spent many months in rural salt pans of Gujarat where I saw and studied the sustainable way of life of traditional tribes amidst dearth of basic resources. I grew up reading Gerald Durrel, and Jane Goodall has been my guiding star. My early professional years were spent with a group of environmentalists fighting against pollution, poison farming and urban waste. Many walks through forests where the bird numbers have dwindled and strolls through rice farms where the butterfly populations have been wiped out

brought a deep sense of pain and concern. Creating awareness about effects of pollution on biodiversity seemed to be an utmost priority. Hence, bridging sustainability and biodiversity through art began as a passionate attempt to address issues of environment.”

Both the workshop and the Artist Talk are free and open to the public.

## High school students imagine Arab world solutions at Georgia Southern

OCTOBER 24, 2016



Area high school students visited Georgia Southern to act as representatives from several Arab world countries, and to work together to form diplomatic solutions to the region’s toughest problems.

The Georgia Southern University Model Arab League (MAL) hosted its first regional conference for area high schools on Saturday, Oct. 1. Local high school Statesboro STEAM Academy joined Frederica Academy and Brunswick High School for the event.

During the simulation, Georgia Southern MAL members served as chairs of the Joint Defense and Political Affairs Council, the Council on Palestinian Affairs and the Council of Arab Environmental and

Social Affairs, as well as the Secretary General, MAL President Kelsey Ramos, who also oversaw the conference.

The students considered a wide range of topics on The Middle East, including the trafficking of small arms among extremists, exploring options to prevent the weaponization of water and discussing ways to promote women's involvement in Arab society.

"There was a good discussion and resolution about the creation of a joint Arab armed forces and command to combat ISIS and religious radicalism," said Jacek Lubecki, Ph.D., associate professor of Political Science, and a MAL faculty advisor.

The conference was officially recognized by the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR), who sent two of their representatives from their Washington, D.C., office to oversee the Georgia Southern delegation. The students' and professors' work on the conference earned praise from the representatives, who discussed having Georgia Southern serve as an official host for collegiate-level Model Arab League conferences in the future.

Lubecki says the discussion means Georgia Southern has "a wonderful opportunity to become the center for MAL-related events in Southeast Georgia."

## Alumna designs 2016 Governor's Award for the Arts & Humanities

OCTOBER 24, 2016



Georgia Southern University alumna Shaunté Francois was selected to design the 2016 Governor's Award for the Arts & Humanities. Francois, a jewelry and small metals artist, graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (3D Studio Arts) in 2015.

Presented by the Office of Governor Nathan Deal in partnership with the Georgia Council for the Arts and Georgia Humanities, the Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities honor the outstanding individuals and organizations making significant contributions to Georgia's civic and cultural vitality through excellence and service to the arts and humanities. A ceremony honoring the recipients

*Governor's Awards for the Arts & Humanities 2016, completed*

was held at the Capitol Building in Atlanta on Oct. 5. This year's recipients include former first lady of Georgia Betty Foy Sanders, an accomplished artist, advocate for the advancement of the arts and art education, and namesake of the University's Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt).

"It is such an honor to be chosen to design and create the 13 awards. It was an overwhelming, but wonderful experience," said Francois. "My favorite part of anything I design is when my sketch comes to life; when the metal forms are cut out, and I can really see what the piece will look like. I am grateful for the mentorship I received from Christina Lemon and the assistance from many others in the BFSDoArt. At the ceremony, I loved watching the recipients receive their awards, and Betty Foy Sanders being one of them made it even more special."

The awards were each handcrafted using copper and bronze metal, and mounted on mahogany wood bases. The lotus flower, representing the power and beauty of nature, symbolically rises above the stylized city silhouette. It represents both the natural world and expanding cities and development.



*Governor's Awards for the Arts & Humanities 2016, in progress. BFSDoA Professor Christina Lemon and student Madeline Shelor work on the lotus blossom portion of the 2016 Governor's Awards for the Arts & Humanities, designed by alumna Shaunté Francois*

Completing the complex, intricate work was a collaborative effort between Francois and the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt). Francois worked with jewelry and small metals Professor Christina Lemon and Art Facilities technician Jason McCoy, as well as Madeline Shelor and other advanced small metals students to assemble the awards.

"The opportunity for BFSDoArt students and faculty to collaborate and create the 2016 Governor's awards for the Arts and Humanities is indicative of the design expertise and professional quality of the undergraduate programs offered at Georgia Southern

University," said department Chair Robert Farber. "The project provided jewelry and small metals students with a client-based experience that required creative problem solving, collaboration and adherence to a strict project deadline. What a wonderful real world experience for our students and faculty."

"This project highlights the importance of 3D art forms and the development of skills that make such works possible. It combined many skills students develop in the 3D program, including small metals, metalsmithing, woodworking, and applied finishing techniques," said Lemon. "I'm so proud





*Governor's Awards for the Arts & Humanities 2016, in progress*

of my students. It is such an honor to work with alumna Shaunté Francois and current student Madeline Shelor on this project and to highlight the talents of these two amazing students and represent our department and University at this prestigious event."

Francois is from Stone Mountain, Georgia. Her interest in jewelry began when she enrolled in a beading class in her hometown at the age of 10. She currently works as a production assistant for jewelry designs at Mickey Lynn, Inc., in Atlanta. Her metal work has been featured in Georgia Southern's literary magazine *Miscellany*, the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art's undergraduate juried exhibition, and at the Averitt Center for the Arts in Statesboro, Georgia.

The Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt) at Georgia Southern University is committed to offering quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs that prepare students to become professional artists, designers, art historians and industry leaders. The BFSDoArt is recognized as an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). For more information, visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/art](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/art).

The Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art is one of 11 departments in the University's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS), the largest of the University's eight colleges and it plays a central role in every student's core of knowledge. CLASS, also described as the University's College of the Creative Mind, prepares students to achieve academic excellence, develop their analytical skills, enhance their creativity and embrace their responsibilities as citizens of their communities, their nations and the world. For more information, visit [class.georgiasouthern.edu](http://class.georgiasouthern.edu).

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Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving approximately 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. [GeorgiaSouthern.edu](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).